

Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

International Conference

Oslo, 4-5 March 2013

Working session III: Humanitarian preparedness and response

Statement by Norway, Deputy Director-General May-Elin Stener, Section for Humanitarian Affairs, MFA

- Thank you for the very interesting and thought-provoking presentations
- Norway believes that the international capacity to respond rapidly and effectively to humanitarian emergencies has improved greatly over the past years. This is due to the relentless and consistent work of international humanitarian organisations, civil society and states to learn from experience and continuously improve our joint response capacity – both in the immediate, short and long term.
- More efficient funding mechanisms; better assessment and understanding of the needs in affected communities and more effective coordination amongst the various actors are factors that have contributed to the improvements we have seen develop.
- This is not to say that everything is perfect, on the contrary, we must all continue working to ensure even better and more adequate assistance to those in need. In the case of a nuclear weapon explosion, international humanitarian organisations as well as civil society organisations engaged in emergency assistance will be expected to be at the forefront of the response.
- Yesterday at the opening we got a clear message from the President of the ICRC, the UN High Commissioner for refugees and OCHA. They all told us that even with a massive investment they are not likely to ever be prepared to respond effectively in the case of a nuclear detonation. The expert presentations we have later heard have confirmed this understanding, which is highly disturbing. The conclusion must be that despite the improvements we have seen over the past years, the systems we have in place are unable to respond to the effects caused by the detonation of a nuclear weapon.
- The issue of nuclear weapons is of concern to all, as has been demonstrated throughout this conference. Empirical evidence and experience from the field, from the humanitarian organisations and from civil society must guide our response to this issue.
- Our joint experience is that discussions must be based on facts and realities on the ground to bring our work forward.
- Thank you.